

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 05128 231523Z

44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10 ACDA-05 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAB-01

/069 W

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O 231456Z DEC 75 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5646

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 5128

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: REPORTED SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LEBANON

REF: A. STATE 300443 B. BEIRUT 15461 C. DAMASCUS 5126

1. EMBASSY HAS BEEN UNABLE TO UNEARTH ANY EVIDENCE
TO SUBSTANTIATE CLAIMS REPORTED REF A CONCERNING
SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION AGAINST ZAHLE.

AMBASSADOR HOPE SEE COS SHIHABI SHORTLY. DATT
HAS VISITED FLO COL. TALAT JAMIL, BROTHER OF AIR
FORCE COMMANDER NAJI JAMIL, AND RECEIVED FLAT
DENIAL THAT SYRIAN MILITARY HAD INTERVENED IN
LEBANON. JAMIL ASSERTED THAT "IF WE WANTED TO
INVADE LEBANON WE WOULD SEND 2,000 TROOPS, NOT
10,000." IN RESPONSE TO DATT QUESTION ON POSSIBLE
PLA AND/OR SAIQA PRESENCE AROUND ZAHLE, JAMIL
NOTED "YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT PALESTINIANS,
NOT SYRIANS," REF C.

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PAGE 02 DAMASC 05128 231523Z

2. SPOT CHECK OF DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY MORNING
DEC. 23 TURNED UP NO FACTS TO SUPPORT ACCUSATION,
BUT INSTEAD PUZZLED SPECULATION ABOUT WHAT SYRIANS
WOULD HAVE TO GAIN BY ALLEGED INTERVENTION AT
THIS PARTICULAR TIME. BRITISH, ABU DHABIANS,
FRENCH AND ITALIANS PROFESS IGNORANCE ABOUT ANY
SYRIAN RESORT TO ARMED INTERVENTION IN ZAHLE.

3. WE UNDERSTAND THAT CHAMOUN HIMSELF HAS NOW
SAID HE WAS MISQUOTED BUT HAVE NOT SEEN TEXT
OF HIS STATEMENT. IN ANY EVENT, AFP REPORTED CHARGE
BY SAIQA SPOKESMAN DEC. 22 THAT ACCUSATION REPRESENTS
AN ATTEMPT TO SOW "CONFUSION" AMONG ARABS. FBIS
HAS CARRIED SYRIAN GOVERNMENT DENIAL AS PUBLISHED
IN JORDANIAN PRESS.

4. COMMENT: WE SEE LITTLE GAIN FOR DAMASCUS FROM
SYRIAN MILITARY ADVENTURE AT PRESENT TIME. WITH
RENEWED SYRIAN MEDIATION EFFORTS BUILDING TO
SOME FORM OF CLIMAX FOLLOWING LAST WEEKEND'S
SHIHABI VISIT TO LEBANON, KARAME TRIP TO DAMASCUS
DEC. 22 AT HEAD OF LEBANESE DELEGATION INCLUDING
COS NASRALLAH, DEP. COS KAN'AN AND G-2 CHIEF JULES
BUSTANI, AND PLANS FOR VISITS BY MARONITE PATRIARCH
AND BY LEBANESE LEFTISTS LED BY JUMBLATT TO SYRIA IN
NEAR FUTURE, SYRIANS SHOULD LOGICALLY NOT WISH TO UNDERCUT
THEIR OWN EFFORTS BY SUCH A CRUDE MANUEVER. THEY ALSO,
AS AL THAWRAH COLUMNIST NOTED IN DEC. 23 ARTICLE, STAND
"AT THE DOORS OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DISCUSSION OF THE MIDDLE
EAST QUESTION BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL, THE
POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF WHOSE DISCUSSION WILL BE
CONCLUSIVE WITH RESPECT TO THE FUTURE COURSE OF
EVENTS OF THE REGION." LAST THING SARG WANTS
IS TO BECOME EMBROILED MILITARILY IN LEBANON THREE
WEEKS PRIOR TO SC SESSION UPON WHICH REGIME HAS
PINNED MEASURE OF HOPE TO PROMOTE ITS CONCEPT OF
PROPER MEANS TO MOVE TOWARDS PEACE.

5. AT RISK OF SEEMING TO JOIN RANKS WITH THE
LOCAL PARANOIDS, WE NOTE COINCIDENCE THAT THIS STORY
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PAGE 03 DAMASC 05128 231523Z

WAS FLOATED ON VERY EVE OF KARAM'S VISIT HERE, JUST
AS "BLACK SATURDAY" COINCIDED WITH GEMAYEL'S TALKS IN
DAMASCUS. HARD TO ESCAPE THE FEELING THAT SOME
PARTIES DO NOT WELCOME SYRIAN MEDIATION.
MURPHY

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